

Faith Report

Restoring: Faith Urban Works

By Gary Coiro

"... faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead."
James 2:17, 26

In 2007, **Faith Urban Works (FUW)** was established as Faith's umbrella entity to unite **Baltimore Christian School (BCS)** and **Pen Lucy Action Network (PLAN)** as a consolidated enterprise for wholistic Christian community development (CCD). Our desire is to be faithful to God's calling to act justly and love mercy as we seek the peace and prosperity of the city. (*Micah 6:8; Jer. 29:7*).

The goal of CCD is to promote the spiritual transformation of people and families in under-resourced neighborhoods. By developing God-given potential and productivity, CCD moves people beyond unnecessary dependency and chronic relief (Ephesians 4:28). CCD is the Church being the redemptive presence of Christ through concrete deeds that affirm dignity, cultivate hope, and restore people to productive service in God's Kingdom.

We at FCF are deeply committed to CCD, which John Perkins defines as *"reconciled Christians working together mobilizing spiritual and physical resources in and*

for communities of need through the Church in a community-determined way that is redemptive."

Through **Faith Urban Works**, we seek to wholistically address educational, recreational, health, economic, and spiritual needs. The core CCD ministries that FCF has initiated and promoted over the years are BCS and PLAN with Pen Lucy Youth Partnership (PLYP). FCF youth ministry is also a great means to fulfill our CCD value.

BCS was founded in 1993 to address Baltimore's educational crisis. In many neighborhoods like Pen Lucy, children routinely enter high school reading several years below grade level. Baltimore's dropout rate is one of the worst in the nation; only 4 in 10 city students will earn a high school diploma. BCS provides a Christian education for approximately 100 students from preschool through fifth grade, and hopes to expand to middle school. Because of its nurturing environment, daily spiritual encouragement, excellent curriculum, small class sizes, and dedicated staff and volunteers, BCS students excel, testing well above their peers. Many are accepted into the city's best magnet or private middle and high schools.

PLAN began in 1998 with PLYP sports leagues to address the area's lack of healthy recreational opportunities. Through our three-season sports leagues, children are

mentored and taught discipline, teamwork, and self-control.

PLAN's Learning Center provides free tutoring for students attending neighboring public schools. Our volunteer tutors not only help children master academic skills, but communicate by their faithful, weekly commitment and relational care that each child is precious in the sight of God.

PLAN partners with Baptist Family Children Services (BFCS), Good Samaritan Network, a crisis intervention ministry, to provide and coordinate care for families facing multiple challenges. A social worker is available monthly in PLAN's office to assist people in and around Pen Lucy.

PLAN also partners with three other organizations—Pen Lucy Neighborhood Association, Guilford Schools, and the Franciscan Youth Center—on a comprehensive needs assessment and asset-mapping projects. The resulting information will be analyzed to determine the area's most critical needs and which organizations are most connected to provide pertinent services.

There are at least 2 ways for you to be vitally engaged. First, FUW has seen countless **volunteers** make weekly commitments to teach, encourage, and mentor youth. In addition, we continue to

Continued on back



**FAITH
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

505 E. 42nd Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: 410.323.0202
Fax: 410.435.5075
E-mail: fcf.church@
verizon.net
www.fcfchurch.org

*United that the
world would
know*

*"He has shown you, O
Man, what is good. And
what does the Lord
require of you? To act
justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly
with your God."
Micah 6:8*

Restoring—cont'd

partner with individuals, churches, and other community and city organizations and carry our vision forward. BCS or PLAN would love to hear from you and empower you to begin making a difference through volunteering. Second, without the **financial support** of dedicated partners, these ministries could not continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus in Pen Lucy and Baltimore. We depend on the support and prayers of our many dedicated friends as we seek the gospel transformation of men, women, and children. You may designate gifts to FUW, BCS, or PLAN. Feel free to contact the development office with any questions. ♦

Thanks to Gary Coiro, our development consultant, for his assistance with this article.

Congratulations!

We give praise and thanks to God for the safe arrival of Joseph Jeremiah Ballard on March 2. Congratulations to BCS Principal Rachel Ballard, her husband Kent, and to big brother Gabriel. ♦

Women's Retreat

Ladies—the women's retreat is April 24-26. We are returning to Black Rock Retreat center in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. We are blessed to have former member Patty Prasada-Rao as our speaker. Patty will talk about the way that Jesus relates to women in the Bible. The last day to sign up is April 5. ♦

Dates For Your Calendar
Apr. 10 Good Friday service 7 p.m.
hosted by FCF.
Apr. 12 Easter Sunday service 10 a.m.
in Kraushaar Auditorium,
Goucher College
Apr. 24-25 Women's Retreat

Easter is almost HERE!

This year we will be celebrating Resurrection Sunday at the Kraushaar Auditorium at Goucher College. Come and join us for worship at 10:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 12. Goucher is located at 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, just inside the beltway. Childcare will be provided and transportation by round trip van from FCF is available. Please call the church office to reserve a space or to offer a ride.

The good news of Jesus Christ is free, so why not give generously this Easter and invite people to the Easter service. You never know—it might change their lives forever!

Pick up an invitation card and **remember to invite F.R.A.N.C.— friends, relatives, acquaintances, neighbors and colleagues!**

This year's **Good Friday** service will be held here at Faith at 7 p.m. on April 10. We will host Abbott Memorial, Forest Park, New Song and City of Hope churches, and celebrate the Lord's Supper together. The service will be followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments. Please bring a tasty treat to share. ♦



Happy Easter!